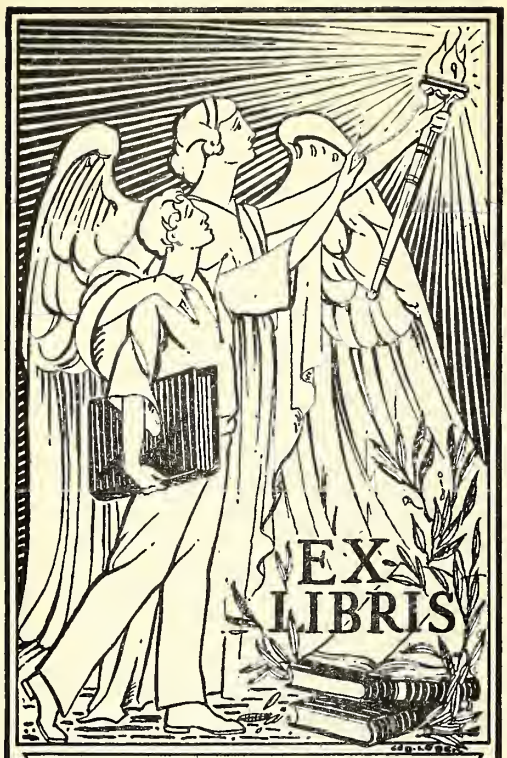
REPORT ON THE ORGANIZATION OF
THE TUNISIAN NATIONAL UNION
FOR THE BLIND



REPORT ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE TUNISIAN NATIONAL UNION FOR THE BLIND

I ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

a. Headquarters

3 rue Bab Carthaghène, Tunis. The Central Committee member ship is composed of 15 blind persons who do voluntary work for their fellow citizens.

b. Secretariat

It is composed of:

One Secretary-General (blind)
One Assistant Secretary-General (not blind)
One Secretary-General for International Relations
One Secretary-General for Cultural and Social Affairs

c. Administration

The Tunisian National Union for the Blind (TNUB) is presided over by Maitre Miladi, founding member of the organization , assisted by two vice-presidents.

The meetings are held weekly and follow a schedule set up in advance by the Secretary-General with the President's approval.

Those members who are not blind are usually chosen according to their social and professional activities.

II PRINTING, AND READING AND AUDIO LIBRARIES

a. Printing

Two small machines for the printing of school textbooks in Braille are at the disposal of classes in Tunis and Sfax and the Campaign against Illiteracy.

In 1959 the production reached 3,500 works printed, totaling 300,000 pages handled and printed by specialized blind workers.

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A bindery run by the blind organizes the classical works.

b. Reading Library

In addition, 750 books of French and Arabic literature are available in the Braille library. These works were copied by hand by voluntary persons who are not blind, and by blind persons.

c. Audio Library

This is a library composed of magnetic tapes on which are recorded some 15 books. It is constantly being added to.

III MEDICAL-SOCIAL CENTER

a. Social

1. Card File - There is a central card file containing the names and background information of 7,300 blind people at the present time. We expect to take a new census of the 18,000 blind now in Tunisia through the aid of our 22 affilated organizations throughout the Republic.

The new census will be undertaken under the recently established definition of blindness put forth in France. That is: when vision is below 1/ 20 degrees, and in certain cases where the vision is above that level, but when the peripheral vision is narrowed down to below 20 degrees.

2. Personnel - A social assistant, put at the disposal of TNUB by the Department of Health and Social Affairs.

3. Clothing - Blue uniforms for the workers (300 in 1959); clothing for the needy (450 in 1959); clothing for fit children whose parents are blind and have been educated, with the necessary scholastic equipment; white walking canes (8,635 in 1959).

4. Health Aids - 230 blind families receive food on a weekly basis. In addition, steps have been taken by the Social Service to aid community and government cases of elderly blind people, or those who have some other infirmity in addition to blindness.

5. Financial Aid - A fund has been established by TNUB for blind families to pay their montly rent (25 benefited during 1959).

Copies are kept by the blind members of the Institute staff.

4. Reading Library

In addition, 786 books of Prose and Verse Literature are available in the Braille library. These books were copied by hand by volunteers who are not blind, and by blind people.

5. Audio Library

This is a library composed of numerous tapes on which are recorded some 15 books. It is constantly being added to.

III MEDICAL-SOCIAL CENTER

A. Social

1. Card File - There is a central card file containing the name and background information of 7,300 blind people of the Province. We expect to take a new census of the 18,000 blind now on Tunisia through the aid of over 22 affiliated organizations throughout the Republic.

The new census will be undertaken under the auspices of the Institute of Blindness put into effect in France. That is, when vision is below 1/20 degrees, and in certain cases where the vision is above that level, but when the peripheral vision is narrowed down below 20 degrees.

2. Personnel - A social assistant put at the disposal of I.N.J.S. by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs.

3. Clothing - Blue uniforms for the workers (300 in 1959), clothing for the needy (400 in 1959); clothing for the children whose parents are blind and have been educated, with the necessary school and equipment; white walking canes (3,000 in 1959).

4. Health Aids - 330 blind families receive food on a weekly basis. In addition, steps have been taken by the Social Service to aid community and year round cases of elderly blind people, or those who have some other infirmity in addition to blindness.

5. Financial Aid - A fund has been established by INJS for blind families to pay their monthly rent (20 beneficiaries during 1959).

b. Medical

1. Dispensary - Created as a result of aid given by the Department of Public Health and Social Affairs on 14 July 1959.

2. Equipment - Instruments, furniture and medications provided by the Department of Health and Social Affairs.

3. Personnel - Two nurses, employed by the Department of Health and Social Affairs, and two doctors. One doctor for general medical consultation, employed by the Department of Public Health and Social Affairs (three times a week); and one doctor for special consultation on ophtalmologic cases (the most urgent cases among the young blind people at the Bir Kassaa school and among the workers in the Cooperative for Blind People are sought out and sent to this same doctor, either to his home or to the Ophtalmologic Center, free of charge).

4. Care - 212 blind people and their families have authorized medical cards. Also, a study is carried on to determine the mental and physical capacities of the patients.

IV CRAFT COOPERATIVES FOR THE BLIND

a. In Tunis (for men)

The headquarters and retail house is located at 11, rue Al Djazira, Tunis. There is an affiliated workshop at 17, rue Bir El Hadjar, Tunis. The cooperative disposes of a total capital of 8,525 D 508 M. In 1959 business in the sum of 10,670 D was carried on. 110 cooperative members take part in the production of the following products: brushes, brooms, cane-bottoming for chairs. They are put out manually or by semi-mechanical methods. A project to establish a feminine cooperative for such articles as carpets and knitware is now under way.

b. In Sfax (for men)

There are 40 cooperative members. A project is under way to form protege cooperatives and workshops in the different districts.

V SCHOLASTIC GROUP FOR ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION AND INSTRUCTION IN SKILLED LABOR IN THE CITY OF THE BLIND, "EN-NOUR", BIR EL KASSAA

a. The Building

The present arrangement consists of: (1) sanitary unit in the courtyard; (2) Enclosed courtyard serving as a workshop for instruction in skills; (3) fence enclosing the land; (4) garden; (5) playground; (6) music stand.

b. Co-Educational Teaching Program

1. Pre-School Study - Kindergarten with six blind students. Their activities include a program of sensorial games. They do manual work to develop and train the senses.

2. Primary Study - Consists of a six-year period. There are 97 students (boys and girls) and 16 classes (five of which are used by the 97 students). There is a pedagogic organization and an official program of the National Board of Education.

Personnel: Three specialized instructors, two of whom are blind.

Scholastic supplies are furnished free of cost by the National Board of Education. Furnishings are given by TNUB from a special fund, these include manuals, individual blackboards, machines, paper, geographical maps, audio-aids, etc. A project is under way to acquire a complete set of machines to type Braille (these will eventually be requested from international organizations).

3. Liberal Secondary Class for the Sixth Grade - There are ten students (boys and girls) with an official program of the National Board of Education.

Personnel: Six professors for secondary instruction from high schools in Tunis, they are voluntary except for two who are paid by TNUB.

Steps are under way at the National Board of Education to realize the completion of the primary period of study (third grade included).

Purpose: To give to certain of our more capable blind students the necessary cultural background to obtain a normal employment as a stenotypist, masseur, interpreter, etc.

c. Teaching of Crafts

1. Feminine Section - This section consists of 17 women aged from 12 to 19 years. The official program of Public Instruction is rug-making, hand-knitting and machine-knitting, and home economics.

2. Male Section - This section consists of a group of 30 workers by trimester, equalling 120 workers per year. They dispose of a semi-mechanical model workshop to advance learning. The program is controled by the Department of Public Health and Social Affairs, and consists of instructions in the skills. It is composed of the following branches: brush-making, basket-making, mat-making, etc.

Personnel: Two specialized monitors paid out of the fund for the training of skilled workers of the Department for Social Affairs (one of the monitors once held a scholarship at B.I.T.)*

Purpose: It is the framework for future cooperatives. The less capable can be directed into work not falling under government laws (ceramics, drilling, pastry-making, paper-work, etc.)

d. Instruction in Technical Subjects

1. Standard Telephonic Section - There are ten students. The program is controlled by the Department of Public Health and Social Affairs, and consists of a one-year period of pratical study. It is planned to turn out 50 telephone operators over a five-year period to be employed within the framework of public administration operators and national organizations. The TNUB will take care of the necessary installations and modifications in the telephone equipment to facilitate the hiring of the trained blind.

2. Steno-Typist Section - There are two monitors paid by the Department of Social Affairs from the fund for the training of skilled workers.

Purpose: This training is obligatory for all blind in the primary scholastic period (from the Fifth Grade), and the secondary so that they may correspond in writing with those who are not blind. This enables them to undertake higher studies or to be hired by the administration (with the use of a dictaphone which is lent to them by TNUB).

e. Mass Therapy Section

To Enable the students to speak with a foreign specialist. This can only be given to young blind people who will derive sufficient cultural background from it, or to recently blind adults of a high intellectual level who will experience a social readaptation.

f. Section for Study of Foreign Languages (Project)

This will be reserved for the more intelligent young blind people and certain of those who have gone to secondary schools. The knowledge of

a foreign language would complete the study of the blind secretaries. The more capable could specialize in simultaneous interpretation and could improve their knowledge by taking interpretation courses in foreign schools.

g. Agricultural Instruction (Project)

There would be a farm school dealing with agriculture, aviculture, arboriculture, stock-breeding and farm products (80% of our blind are from rural areas).

h. Municipal Section

Project under study.

i. International Section

There is a dormitory containing 24 rooms, 100 beds, and equipment. There are 107 residents. In addition, there is a dining hall and kitchen, which are supplied with food by TNUB. The play room has a piano, radio, phonograph and record library. Outside there is a stadium where games with a ball with bells in it are played, and physical training and gymnastics are taught.

VI HOME FOR BLIND STUDENTS

This is located at 44, rue Tourbet El Bey, Tunis. Seventeen blind students reside there during the school year and are provided with room and board.

VII BRANCHES IN THE INTERIOR

Instruction

1.- School in Sfax, 36 students and two blind instructors. Equipment is furnished by TNUB.

2. Mobile unit for the Campaign against Illiteracy - adult courses in braille which include reading and writing.

*I.L.O.